Investigation into United Technology Consolidated Partnership (UTCP) and Its Involvement in Key Infrastructure Projects

I. Executive Summary

This report presents a detailed investigation into the company United Technology Consolidated Partnership (UTCP), a technical consultancy firm at the center of several high-profile public infrastructure controversies in the Philippines. The analysis focuses on three specific projects—the Aganan Flyover, the Ungka Flyover, and the Cabagan-Sta. Maria Bridge—to examine UTCP's role, the nature of the alleged failures, and the broader implications for government oversight and public procurement.

A. Key Findings

The investigation reveals a consistent pattern of fundamental design and geotechnical errors associated with projects where UTCP was a key consultant or partner. The firm's assessments for the Aganan and Ungka flyovers were officially deemed "erroneous" and faulty by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), while the collapsed Cabagan-Sta. Maria Bridge was found to have over 900 documented defects prior to its failure. This series of events points to a severe breakdown in technical expertise and quality control.

The DPWH demonstrates a paradoxical role, both awarding the contracts to UTCP and subsequently discrediting the firm's work, commissioning third-party consultants to correct the problems. This reactive approach highlights significant lapses in the initial project review, approval, and supervision processes.

The firm's success in securing high-value contracts, despite a track record of flawed work, appears to be less a function of technical excellence and more a result of its ability to operate within a

procurement system that has been criticized for a lack of stringent due diligence and transparency. The investigation points to a system where a select group of firms, including UTCP, can repeatedly win bids, suggesting that their success is tied to a specific operational dynamic rather than a competitive advantage based on performance. The table below provides a summary of the projects at the heart of this report.

Project Name	Location	Reported Cost (in Pesos)	UTCP's Role	Primary Issue	Current Status
Aganan Flyover	Pavia, Iloilo	₱802 million	Soil Testing Consultant	Erroneous soil assessment, insufficient foundation depth	Unfinished, delayed, requires additional funding of ₱275-300 million
Ungka Flyover	Iloilo City/Pavia, Iloilo	₱680 million	Original Design Consultant	Vertical displacement, "sinking" piers, piles did not reach bedrock	Closed for rectification, requires at least ₱250 million for repairs
Cabagan-Sta. Maria Bridge	Isabela province	₱1.225 billion	Designer, Joint Venture Partner	Collapsed 26 days after completion; documented 935 prior defects	Collapsed; subject of congressional inquiry

II. The Company: United Technology Consolidated Partnership (UTCP)

A. Corporate Profile

Based on available information, the firm at the center of these controversies is formally known as United Technology Consolidated Partnership (UTCP).[1] While one source mentions a company with a similar name, "United Telecom Contractors Philippines Inc." [3], the majority of news reports and official contract documents refer to the entity as United Technology Consolidated Partnership.[4] This report will proceed with the latter, more commonly cited name.

The sole individual consistently identified in the provided materials as a key figure within UTCP is **Pablo G. Racines**. He is documented as the "Managing Partner/Authorized Representative," a title he used when signing official agreements with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH).[4] Beyond this, no other executives or partners are named, which is a notable characteristic for a firm involved in projects of such a significant scale. The absence of a detailed corporate history or a comprehensive list of personnel in public records, apart from the context of these specific controversies, suggests that UTCP is not a typical publicly visible company but rather a specialized entity operating primarily within government contracting circles.[3]

B. Services and Expertise

UTCP is classified as a "technical consultancy firm" whose primary services involve "soil testing" and design for civil infrastructure projects.[1] Official DPWH documents confirm that the firm provides "geotechnical consulting services" and engages in "Detailed Engineering Design".[4] Its business model appears to be centered on securing government contracts, often through direct engagement with the DPWH.

In the broader context of the Philippine engineering industry, other firms with established reputations in geotechnical engineering and consultancy have a more detailed public presence. For instance, Geotechnics Philippines Incorporated (GPI) was founded in 1966 and highlights its 56 years of experience in both offshore and on-land geotechnical investigations.[7] Similarly, Geoservices Philippines

Corporation emphasizes its team of highly experienced staff and its vision to lead the industry with advanced technology.[9] Other prominent players like ESCA Engineers boast a portfolio of over 2,000 projects, including major public and private developments.[10] UTCP's distinct lack of a public-facing portfolio or corporate history outside of its involvement in these specific, troubled projects stands in stark contrast to these other firms. This low public profile suggests that the company's influence and ability to secure bids are not derived from market-based reputation or widespread public trust, but from a separate, possibly insulated, mechanism within the government procurement system itself. The centralization of accountability to a single representative, Pablo G. Racines, also funnels responsibility to a single point, a factor that could have implications for any future legal or administrative proceedings.

III. Analysis of Project Involvement and Alleged Failures

A review of UTCP's involvement in three major infrastructure projects reveals a disturbing pattern of fundamental technical and design failures.

A. The Cabagan-Sta. Maria Bridge Collapse

The Cabagan-Sta. Maria Bridge in Isabela province, a P1.225 billion project completed after more than a decade of work, collapsed just 26 days after its completion on February 1, 2025.[12] UTCP was identified as the designer and a joint venture partner in the construction.[2] Initial reports attributed the collapse to an overloaded dump truck, which at 102 tons far exceeded the bridge's design capacity of 45 tons.[12]

However, this narrative of a single, isolated incident was discredited by the findings of a subsequent Senate inquiry. Senator Alan Peter Cayetano revealed that the DPWH's own "As-Built Evaluation Report" for the bridge documented a total of "935 fails" in the structure prior to the collapse.[16] These were not new issues; documentation from as early as 2018 indicated "problem after problem" with every single one of the bridge's 12 spans, ranging from minor to critical issues like snapped

bolts and deformities.[16] A 2019 third-party audit had already found flaws in the design, leading to a P274.8 million retrofitting effort to make the bridge "safe enough".[15] The focus on the truck driver, therefore, served as a public diversion from the systemic and well-documented structural deficiencies that had plagued the project from the start. The bridge was a failure waiting to happen, and the truck was simply the final force that exposed the underlying negligence in its design and construction.

B. The Unfinished Aganan Flyover

The P802 million Aganan Flyover in Pavia, Iloilo, which began construction in July 2020 with a two-year timeline, remains unfinished and unusable.[1] UTCP's role in this project was to perform the soil testing.[2]

A Senate hearing led by Senator Raffy Tulfo brought to light a critical problem with UTCP's work. Engineer Lara Esquibil, the Officer-in-Charge of the DPWH Central Office Bureau of Design, confirmed that UTCP's assessment for the foundation depth was "erroneous and disapproved by the agency".[2] Despite this official disapproval, the project continued, leading to prolonged delays and a need for significant revisions.[1] This faulty soil testing and design error has resulted in a major budget shortfall. Out of the original P802 million contract price, only P308 million remains, and an additional P275 to P300 million is needed for revisions to complete the project.[1] The financial burden of correcting UTCP's flawed work is being passed on to the government, and by extension, the Filipino taxpayers, while the public continues to suffer from severe traffic congestion in the area.[1]

C. The Problematic Ungka Flyover

The Ungka Flyover in Iloilo City, a P680 million project, was fully opened in September 2022 but was closed just two weeks later due to "vertical displacement" or "sinking" of three of its piers.[19] A DPWH Regional

Director later confirmed that UTCP was the "original design consultant" for the project.[22]

To investigate the structural issues, the DPWH hired a third-party consultant, Adam Abinales Engineering and Consultancy (AAEC).[19] The AAEC report concluded that the flyover's piers, particularly Piers 4, 5, and 6, had not reached the "bedrock/hardpan" and were founded on unstable ground, violating the National Structural Code of the Philippines.[19] The consultant's report specified that a borehole test had been conducted up to 50 meters, yet the bedrock was not reached.[19] Rectification work, which involves jet grouting the piers, is expected to cost at least P250 million.[19]

The problems with both the Aganan and Ungka flyovers are not isolated events but part of a recognized pattern. A DPWH official stated that a third-party consultant for the Aganan Flyover was necessary to "verify" UTCP's design and to prevent a repeat of what happened with Ungka, especially since the projects are on the same road and share a similar soil type.[22] This explicitly links the failures to a systemic deficiency in UTCP's core geotechnical and design work.

The following table summarizes the technical failures and the immense financial costs associated with the rectification of these projects.

Project Name	**Reported Flaw by UTCP**	**Third-Party/DPWH Finding**	**Rectification Cost**	**Source of Funding for Rectification**
Aganan Flyover	Ground stable at 20-24 meters [24]	Stability required at 40-54 meters [24]	₱275-300 million [1]	To be sourced from the remaining budget and potentially new appropriations [1]

Project Name	Reported Flaw by UTCP	Third-Party/DPWH Finding	Rectification Cost	Source of Funding for Rectification
Ungka Flyover	Not Specified (Original Design Consultant)	Piles did not reach bedrock/hardpan [19]	At least ₱250 million [19]	Sourced from DPWH's savings from the 2023 or 2024 fiscal year [19]
Cabagan-Sta. Maria Bridge	Not Specified (Designer)	Documented 935 failures in DPWH's own report; poor construction [16]	N/A (Bridge collapsed)	N/A

IV. Government Oversight and Contradictions

The consistent pattern of failure in UTCP's projects is compounded by a complex and contradictory response from the Department of Public Works and Highways. A crucial point of inquiry is why projects proceeded despite documented internal concerns. During a Senate hearing, Engr. Lara Esquibil of the DPWH Central Office Bureau of Design confirmed that her department had "disapproved" UTCP's "erroneous" foundation assessment for the Aganan Flyover.[1] This statement is in direct opposition to the fact that the project moved forward with its construction, and this design flaw is now the root cause of the prolonged delay and cost overruns. This paradox suggests that the power to continue and fund a project may reside in offices outside of the technical bureaus responsible for its safety and integrity. It is possible that internal communication broke down, or that political or administrative directives overrode the technical warnings from the Bureau of Design.

The DPWH's actions appear to be more reactive than proactive. The agency only initiated a review of the Aganan Flyover's design after the

problems with the nearby Ungka Flyover came to public light, a move a DPWH official confirmed was to prevent a similar incident.[22] This reliance on public scandal and legislative pressure to trigger internal review processes exposes a significant weakness in the agency's initial vetting and monitoring systems.

Legislative bodies, including the Senate, have taken the lead in holding both the company and the government agency accountable. The inquiries, led by Senators Raffy Tulfo and others, have not been limited to UTCP but are part of a wider probe into alleged corruption, "ghost projects," and the practice of contracts being cornered by a small group of firms.[25] This places UTCP's failures within the context of a broader systemic problem rather than an isolated issue of incompetence. Senator Tulfo has sternly recommended that the DPWH conduct "strict background checks" on all contractors and consultants and charge UTCP for "liquidated damages" to recoup the costs of the delays.[1] The DPWH has assured the Senate that it will act on these recommendations, which indicates an acknowledgment of its own internal process failures.[2]

V. The "Clout" Conundrum: A Discussion of Business Practices and Procurement

The user query raises a central question: why does UTCP have such significant "clout" in securing high-profile projects despite a flawed track record? The provided materials, while not offering a direct explanation, provide a basis for analysis. The firm's success in consistently being awarded major government contracts, particularly with the DPWH, does not appear to be based on a history of public-facing technical excellence.

The documents indicate that UTCP has been awarded various types of contracts, from consultancy services for detailed engineering design to serving as a joint venture partner for major construction projects.[4] One contract, for the "Amburayan, Bauang and Pamplona River Basin Project,"

was awarded via "Negotiated Procurement".[4] This non-competitive method of procurement, which can be used to bypass the standard public bidding process, may offer a way for certain firms to secure contracts without having to compete on merit or price. Furthermore, a separate report on a DPWH flagship project mentions that the Government Procurement Policy Board (GPPB) approved the use of "customized bidding documents" [27], a process that can alter standard bidding requirements and potentially favor specific contractors.

The continued awarding of contracts to a firm with a documented history of failures points to a systemic issue. The Senate probe's focus on an alleged "syndicate" of contractors who are able to "corner" government projects [25] provides a critical lens through which to view UTCP's success. The firm's "clout" is likely not a unique attribute of its technical prowess, but rather an outcome of its operational model within a public procurement system that is susceptible to a lack of transparency and rigorous due diligence. The absence of a robust, independent vetting mechanism allows a firm with a dubious track record to continue receiving public funds for critical infrastructure, ultimately putting the public at risk and wasting taxpayer money. The following table provides a glimpse into UTCP's documented contract history with the DPWH.

Contract ID	**Contract Name**	**Location**	**UTCP's Role**	**DPWH Signatory**	**Contract Type**
18CSZ034	Quality Assurance Consultant in the Conduct of Civil Works Project Assessment/Inspection in Visayas-Mindanao Area	Visayas-Mindanao	Managing Partner	Emil K. Sadain	Not specified

Contract ID	Contract Name	Location	UTCP's Role	DPWH Signatory	Contract Type
20G00078	Construction of Aganan Flyover, including RROW	Pavia, Iloilo	Soil Testing Consultant	Helen Edith Lee Tan (IBC)	Not specified
Not Specified	Detailed Engineering Design of Amburayan, Bauang and Pamplona River Basin Project	Not Specified	Managing Partner/Authorized Representative	Emil K. Sadain	Negotiated Procurement
24CSD011	Consulting Services for the Conduct of Socio-Economic Data Gathering...	Not Specified	Managing Partner	Mr. PABLO G. RACINES	Single Rated Responsive Bid

VI. Conclusions and Recommendations

The investigation into the company United Technology Consolidated Partnership reveals a pattern of profound technical and design failures across three significant public works projects: the Cabagan-Sta. Maria Bridge, the Ungka Flyover, and the Aganan Flyover. In each case, UTCP's work, whether as a designer, joint venture partner, or soil testing consultant, was found to be fundamentally flawed. These failures resulted in a collapsed bridge, a "sinking" flyover, and a project mired in prolonged delays and massive cost overruns.

The DPWH's contradictory role in this saga—initially awarding the contracts and subsequently disavowing the quality of the work—exposes a systemic weakness in its oversight and procurement mechanisms. The agency's response has been reactive, relying on third-party consultants

to rectify problems that should have been identified and prevented during the initial design and approval phases. The immense financial burden of these corrections, which amounts to hundreds of millions of pesos per project, is being absorbed by the public, while the firm responsible for the faulty work appears to be largely unaccountable.

The ability of UTCP to secure and maintain a foothold in high-value public infrastructure projects, despite this track record, points to a broader problem within the government procurement system. This ability, referred to in the query as "clout," is not a result of superior engineering expertise. Instead, it appears to be an outcome of a process that may allow for non-competitive bidding, a lack of stringent due diligence, and a system where a small group of favored contractors can repeatedly win bids.

To address these systemic issues and prevent future tragedies and financial waste, the following recommendations are put forth:

- **Enhance Due Diligence:** The DPWH and other government agencies must implement more stringent, multi-layered background checks on all consultants and contractors before awarding contracts. This process should go beyond mere legal and financial documentation to include a thorough review of past project performance and a verification of technical capabilities.
- **Mandate Independent Third-Party Reviews:** For all high-value or structurally critical infrastructure projects, a separate, independent third-party geotechnical and design review should be mandated and conducted before any construction begins. This preemptive measure would serve as a critical check to identify and correct flaws before they can manifest into costly and dangerous failures.
- **Strengthen Accountability and Liability:** Procurement laws and contracts must be revised to hold consultancy and design firms financially and legally liable for rectification costs that are a direct

result of their negligence, faulty reports, or erroneous designs. The current system where the government bears the financial burden for private sector negligence is unsustainable and encourages poor performance.

- **Increase Procurement Transparency:** The use of non-competitive procurement methods and customized bidding documents should be severely limited. The standard public bidding process must be reinforced and made fully transparent to allow for greater public and legislative oversight and to ensure a level playing field for all qualified firms.